

GRAND JURY AND FOOD PRICES. WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH BUSINESS MEN?

We should think that by this time the daily papers and most of the weeklies together with the Real Estate association and other similar fakirs would be heartily ashamed of themselves. Several months ago it will be remembered the parties and things aforesaid raised a most tempestuous hue and cry against the retail grocers and meat dealers of the city alleging that they were in a hard and fast combine whereby the prices of everything used for food were raised to an unconscionable figure, that the combine was "holding up" the public and getting rich at the expense of the people and that the wholesale grocers, meat dealers, butchers, butter merchants and creameries were aiding and abetting the alleged combine and standing in with it. Day after day the papers concocted and published sensational articles about the alleged hold up game and the real estate fakirs held meetings, passed resolutions and provided oil and other fuel to feed the flames. The public from those false and foundationless articles was worked up to a high state of excitement and the court officials were forced to call a special grand jury to investigate the alleged abuses. Truth was the only paper that was not carried away by the senseless clamor.

The grand jury after months of patient and careful labor and thorough investigation reported last Saturday.

The grand jury finds first of all that there is not and was not a "food trust" or any combination to fix and maintain uniform prices or to raise the prices of food and practice extortion on the public.

As to the retailers the grand jury finds that each person or firm in the business fixes his own prices at which he sells and such a thing as anything like uniformity in prices is not known, each being governed by the peculiar conditions to which he is subject.

The inquisitors also found that while prices of food products are high in Salt Lake, they are not as high as in most other towns in the country and that the retailers in Salt Lake are not only in no wise to blame for the high prices, but are actual losers thereby because the retail prices have not been advanced nearly in the same proportion as the wholesale prices.

The grand jury is composed of sound, sensible men who have no desire and have no object in doing anything other than what is right and just. Their investigation which was spread over several months was full and very complete. No sensible unprejudiced person can doubt for a moment that the grand jury arrived at the ultimate truth and the facts and have stated them.

If John D. Rockefeller wants to show his patriotism, he should pay that \$29,000,000 fine, now, so uncle Sam can use it for Christmas.

Appropos of the Manufacturers & Merchants' association of Utah; What is the matter with the business men of Salt Lake? Here we have an organization scarcely two years old, hardly old enough to have passed its experimental stage, and yet many of the business men of the city who would never think of questioning the work accomplished by the manager of a business enterprise having had but the same limited time in which to operate, are most clamorous in their demands to know just what the M. & M. association has accomplished. And what efforts have they themselves put into the association? Paid their little dues, in many cases with reluctance, and always in a desire to get back double the amount of the investment. It is a peculiar characteristic of many of the business giants (?) of this community, that in every movement of a public nature, and by that we mean any organized effort to promote the interests of Salt Lake—unless it can be pointed out to them just where they receive returns "pressed down and running over" for every little penny they grudgingly give toward it, they "fail to see wherein it has accomplished anything."

The same few loyal fellows put their time and strength and means into the effort, only to be met with kicks and groans from the very men who should be with them heart and soul in any movement looking to the betterment of conditions in general. Is it peckiness—or just a failure to understand the object for which this organization is striving? It is not generally known that Utah has no Chamber of Commerce. What is now known as the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce exists in name only.

The M. & M. association in joint connection with two other organizations is maintaining, at their own expense, an exhibit of what is made and produced in Utah. Mr. Businessman: is an exhibit of this kind a good thing for the state? Visited daily by all tourists that come to the city, the "Seeing Salt Lake" cars having their office there, men kept on hand to show the visitor through the exhibit, and inform them of the wonderful possibilities of Utah. Is that of any benefit to Utah? If it is, why are you not supporting it? Is the effort of Secretary Haddock, of the M. & M. association, to compile data for the information of inquiring investors worthy of support? If so, why don't you support it?

But now come we to the "individual benefit" you are always so eager to hear about. Mr. Manufacturer, let us take your case under advisement. You are manufacturing goods, equal in quality and lower in price than what are being shipped in here from outside manufacturers, but you are not getting them into the hands of local dealers as you would desire; that is the proposition. Now then, would not the co-operation of this secretary

of a representative organization of business interests in getting your goods on the shelves of local dealers, be a good thing for yourself? If you give him a list of your products, also the names of firms that are not carrying your goods at present, and he were to take up a personal labor with those houses in your behalf, pointing out the superiority of your goods, appealing to their loyalty to home institutions, portraying the benefits to be derived from conserving home interests, keeping the money at home, furnishing employment for Utah men and women, adding to the general prosperity of the state, would it be of any "individual benefit" in that case? And all because you are loyal enough to pay the small, the very small membership fee charged by the M. & M., and every cent of the money received is spent in furthering the interests of Utah in general, Salt Lake in particular. Have you ever visited the exhibit in the building known as the Chamber of Commerce? No! Haven't manifested enough interest in the association to even take your wife, or visiting friends to see what Utah has to offer. You are a patriot, aren't you? Sure, you are! Love your state, and all that sort of thing, why of course! Why do you love it? What do you know of its resources, anyhow? Mr. Merchant, have you ever visited the Chamber of Commerce exhibit? Is it a nice thing to have a business organization that is endeavoring to look after your interests? A sort of an obliging friend through which you can secure the reciprocal relationship that should exist among business men. Not a social order, but an association in which the firm, not the individual, is represented. A kind of a "you help my interests, and I'll help yours" sort of a society. Is that sort of a thing any good to you? But say you, it hasn't done so up to the present. Well, different men have different ideas.

THE SAILING OF THE SHIPS.

Everybody doesn't know that those sixteen big battleships which set sail from our Eastern shores on Monday last is the greatest armada that ever left a nation's shores in all history, but such is undoubtedly the case.

There are some other things in this connection that everybody is not aware of. One of them is that within the narrow span of a dozen years the navy of the United States has progressed from the eighth in point of tonnage and effectiveness to the second place in the category, being excelled only by Great Britain. But for the stubborn—it might be said dogged—determination of Johnny Bull to keep his lead just for the sake of keeping it and thereby building ships that he has no present or prospective need of, we should soon be alongside of him if not indeed first on the list. And that may come to pass any way, for at the present

we have more vessels under actual construction than he has.

It was an event that must be set down in the history of nations, that which took place off Fortress Monroe on the 16th of December, 1907. It was a quiet but most effective note of warning to the world that henceforth the United States is the power of the western seas wherever and whenever she sees fit to assert her supremacy. For let it be remembered, as it is already abundantly known, that it is not only in big and steel-clad vessels with ponderous mechanism and powerful armament that our nation excels, but also in the stout-hearted, strong-limbed, keen-eyed, indefatigable men who comprise the crews; men who make a score of 98 in a possible hundred and once in action never will quit pounding and thundering until all is silent on the other side.

Suppose we had had such a naval equipment when the Maine left our shores on a friendly visit to Cuban waters—is it believable she would have been treacherously blown into a gnarled and twisted heap of ruins with a dozen score of the brave souls who manned her sent into eternity without warning? And escaping that, how could there have been war with Spain? That nation's arrogance and insolent unwillingness to make terms without a clash was born of her mistaken belief that her forces on the water were superior to ours, a belief which, had it not excluded the most important factor in the computation—the men—would have been painfully correct; and what a dear price she paid for that mistake! But it was for the best, after all. Spain, with her colonies freed, her fool pride humbled into the dust, her effective militant force on the sea destroyed, and with a big and useful lesson learned, is doing better than ever before in her history, while the United States—well, look at her, just for a minute!

The sailing of the great fleet on Monday will amount to nothing more than a breaking in of new craft and a period of drilling for its men unless some other nation sees fit to make a break in the programme. This is not looked for nor desired; but if it comes, heaven help those responsible for it! Let us continue to hope that the time for putting Japan's insolence away where Spain's vanity has been laid to rest is still some years ahead.

Speaker Cannon has resumed smoking up at the oil stand.

DECEMBER EXCURSIONS EAST

VIA the Colorado Midland Railway Co., to Colorado and Missouri River points greatly reduced rates, December 19th and 20th. Ticket Office 77 West 2nd South St. Telephone 678.

Yours truly,
L. H. HARDING, Gen'l Agt.
T. G. W.